

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

Historic name Locate Creek Bridge

Other names/site number 24CR761/MDT Identification No. L09305003+03001

2. Location

street & number Milepost 3 on North Locate Road ☐ not for publication

city of town 27 miles east of Miles City ☒ vicinity

State Montana code MT county Custer code 017 zip code n/a

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national X statewide X local

Signature of certifying official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

 entered in the National Register

 determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain:)

Locate Creek Bridge

Name of Property

Custer, Montana

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal
<input type="checkbox"/>	private

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		Objects
		buildings
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Montana's Historic Steel Stringer and Steel Girder
Bridges, 1901-1961

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related (vehicular) =

Bridge

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related (vehicular) =

Bridge

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Steel Stringer Bridge

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: WOOD: Timber

walls:

roof:

other: METAL: Steel, WOOD: Timber

Locate Creek Bridge

Name of Property

Custer, Montana

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Locate Creek Bridge consists of one contributing structure, a steel stringer bridge built in 1901 by Custer County. The County intended the bridge to facilitate movement of agricultural products between a rural area of the county and Miles City. The bridge measures 40 feet long by 16 feet wide and consists simply of steel I-beam stringers resting on timber abutments. The bridge appears exactly as it did in 1901 and functions in its historic capacity. The setting has not changed since Custer County built the bridge.

Narrative Description

The Locate Creek Bridge is located in the lower Powder River valley of southeastern Montana. The bridge crosses Locate Creek on North Locate Creek Road about three miles north of the rural community of Locate. Locate is located about 27 miles east of Miles City on US Highway 12. The bridge is located within the Fort Union Formation, which formed about 65 million years ago during Cretaceous times and marks the vast coastal plains that once bordered an inland sea. The surrounding area is part of the northern Great Plains characterized by rolling hills, numerous dry drainages and small creeks, and grassy vegetation. The area around the bridge is currently used for cattle grazing.¹

The Locate Creek Bridge is a single-span steel stringer structure. The simple bridge is 40 feet in length and 16 feet wide with a roadway width of 16 feet. The bridge ends rest on high timber abutments and timber wingwalls braced by timber pilings. The deck is supported by seven lines of steel I-beam stringers. The deck is comprised of timber boards flanked by low angle section guardrails.

Integrity

The bridge retains excellent integrity and is exemplary of a simple steel stringer structure. All of the original components (except for the deck) are intact and unchanged and the setting remains the same as when the bridge was constructed.

¹ David Alt and Donald W. Hyndman, *Roadside Geology of Montana*, (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing, 1991), 384.

Locate Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Custer, Montana
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Engineering

Transportation

Period of Significance

1901-1961

Significant Dates

1901

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Custer County

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance for this site encompasses the construction of the bridge in 1901 by Custer County and its continuing use as an important element of a rural route in southeastern Montana. The bridge continues to serve the rural residents of the county.

Locate Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Custer, Montana
County and State

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The Locate Creek Bridge can be listed on the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. The bridge is representative of Custer County's efforts to provide inexpensive and efficient infrastructure to its residents at the turn-of-the-twentieth century. The bridge was located on an important farm-to-market road in the county and facilitated the transportation of agricultural products and livestock to the Northern Pacific Railway's shipping facilities at Miles City. The bridge is also eligible as the oldest known steel stringer bridge remaining in Montana (and quite possibly the first steel stringer bridge built in the state) and as an excellent example of a ubiquitous bridge type on both rural and state roads across Montana.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

The Locate Creek Bridge can be listed on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the development of Custer County beginning at the turn-of-the-twentieth century. The county commissioners intended inexpensive and efficient bridges to facilitate traffic to Miles City and other railroad stations. Between 1901 and 1910, the county built at least ten simple steel stringer bridges on farm-to-market roads. The Locate Creek Bridge is the oldest known steel stringer bridge in Montana and the oldest remaining in Custer County. The simple design continues to be utilized by Montana's counties to provide inexpensive crossings of obstacles within their jurisdictions.

The bridge is also an excellent example of a simple steel stringer structure. The bridge consists, simply, of seven lines of steel I-beam stringers placed atop timber abutments. The original components of the bridge are intact as are the original angle section guardrails. The bridge retains excellent integrity and serves as a good example of the type of steel I-beam stringer bridges built by the hundreds by the counties and state from circa 1901 until the present. The bridge, therefore, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

Engineering Significance

The Locate Creek Bridge is the first known steel I-beam stringer bridge built in Montana. It represents part of a broad project by Custer County to provide to its constituents inexpensive and efficient bridges on the county's farm-to-market roads. Steel stringer bridges, such as the Locate Creek Bridge, like this one were and continue to be built on Montana's county and state roads. Variations occurred only in the presence or type of guardrails.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

In 1901, Custer County embarked on a project to construct ten steel stringer bridges on farm-to-market roads. The bridges were constructed by the county from a standard design developed by the County Surveyor or purchased by him. The bridge is the first steel stringer structure built by Custer County.²

² Jon Axline, *Monuments Above the Water: Montana's Historic Highway Bridges, 1860-1956*, (Helena: Montana Department of Transportation, 1993), 101-102.

Locate Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Custer, Montana
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Alt, David and Donald W. Hyndman. *Roadside Geology of Montana*. (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing, 1991).

Axline, Jon. *Monuments Above the Water: Montana's Historic Highway Bridges, 1860-1956*. (Helena: Montana Department of Transportation, 1992).

Bridge Inspection Record No. L09305003+03001. Montana Department of Transportation. Helena, Montana.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☒ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: Montana Department of Transportation

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.5
(do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>13</u> Zone	<u>476627</u> Easting	<u>5146838</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundary for the Locate Bridge measures 40 x 25 feet. The boundary encompasses the bridge and its approaches on both sides of the creek. The boundary is centered on the bridge.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

Boundaries for the Locate Creek Bridge are drawn to encompass the single span of the bridge, its immediate approaches and that portion of the creek spanned by the bridge. The width is increased beyond the measurements of the structure to include the abutments.

Locate Creek Bridge
Name of Property

Custer, Montana
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jon Axline/Historian

organization Montana Department of Transportation

date December 10, 2010

street & number 2701 Prospect Avenue

telephone (406) 444-6258

city or town Helena

state MT

zip code 59620-1001

e-mail jaxline@mt.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of ____.

(See Continuation Sheets)

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Custer County

street & number 1010 Main Street

telephone 406-847-3351

city or town Miles City

state MT

zip code 59301-3419

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Locate Creek

Name of Property

Custer, MT

County and State

Montana's Historic Steel Stringer and Steel
Girder Bridges, 1901-1961

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Maps Page 8



Locate, Montana USGS Quadrangle map, 1969

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Section number _____ Photographs _____ Page 9

Name:	Locate Creek Bridge (24CR761)
County and State:	Custer County, Montana
Photographer:	Kristi Hager
Date of Photograph:	2005
Location of original negative:	Montana Department of Transportation. Helena, Montana.
Description and view of camera:	North profile. View to the southwest
Photograph:	0001

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Section number Photographs

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Photo 0001. Locate Creek Bridge. North profile. View to the southwest.